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ABSTRACT

The background and services of the New York City School Volunteer Program, which serves as a model for similar programs established in other parts of the country and abroad, are described. The volunteers serve on all grade levels, K-12, mainly in the areas of reading improvement and English as a second language. Assigned only to those schools whose principals and teachers request their services, the volunteers are an auxiliary, supplementary resource. Areas of the program described include history and philosophy, administration, financing, recruitment, screening, training, supervision, liability insurance, the reading help program, the English as a second language program, and the early childhood program. A listing of materials produced through the program is included. (HOD)

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THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Board of Education - City of New York
and
New York City School Volunteer Program, Inc.
20 West 40 Street
New York, N. Y. 10018

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HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

The New York City School Volunteer Program was initiated in 1956 as an experiment in the structured use of unpaid volunteers to assist teachers and pupils in the public schools. The program functioned as a pilot project of the Public Education Association with a Ford Foundation grant until 1962, when it was adopted by the New York City Board of Education. It serves as a model for similar programs established in other parts of the country and abroad.*

The type of service offered by School Volunteers has changed over the years from purely mechanical routine chores performed for the teacher to tutorial assistance for individual pupils. This change evolved as teachers acquired confidence in the volunteers' skills and dependability, and as the School Volunteer Program refined its techniques of training and supervision.

Volunteers serve on all grade levels from kindergarten to high school, mainly in the areas of reading improvement and teaching English as a second language. They are assigned only to those schools whose principals and teachers request their services. They work only with pupils referred to them by the teachers and other school professionals. It is made clear to all concerned that the volunteer is an auxiliary, a supplementary resource--never a replacement--for the teacher.

ADMINISTRATION

The Program is administered jointly by the School Volunteer Central Office (an agency of the Central Board of Education) and those community school districts which elect to participate. The Central Office develops guidelines, handles city-wide recruitment and publicity, and serves as a coordinating agency and resource center for the community school districts. It also administers the program in the city's high schools and special schools, which remain under the jurisdiction of the Central Board of Education.

FINANCING

The Program is financed mainly by public funds provided by the Central Board of Education and the school boards of participating school districts. Supplementary financing is provided by the New York City School Volunteer Program, Inc., a non-profit organization which raises funds from foundations, businesses and other sources to expedite the expansion of the program throughout the city and to provide seed money for experimental new uses of volunteers in the schools.

* For further information write to: National School Volunteer Program, Inc.
450 North Grand Avenue, Room G-114
Los Angeles, California 90051
(213) 687-4194

RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

Volunteers are recruited in a variety of ways - city-wide publicity in newspapers, magazines, radio and television, referrals by other volunteers and other agencies, etc. Most of the general publicity originates from the Central Office. The Central Office also advises and furnishes materials to those community school districts where recruitment is directed mainly toward parents associations and neighborhood groups.

Every new recruit is interviewed by a trained volunteer interviewer. Although there are no specific age, education or experience requirements, volunteers must be healthy, emotionally stable, dependable people who can work well with children and young people. Satisfactory medical and character references and a tuberculosis screening examination are required before a volunteer is accepted in the program.

TRAINING

Before assignment to a school, every new recruit is required to attend a series of training sessions in his chosen area of service. Pre-service training courses, ranging from ten to thirteen hours are conducted monthly throughout the school year at the School Volunteer Central Office. They are also conducted as needed in those districts from which volunteers cannot conveniently travel to the Central Office. The instructors are either teachers on the professional staff or highly experienced volunteers.

All new volunteers are given an orientation to the New York City public school system, to the background and philosophy of the School Volunteer Program and to the characteristics of the pupils involved in the program. They then attend workshops in techniques for reading tutoring, for teaching English as a second language, or for serving as an Early Childhood classroom assistant.

There is continuous on-the-job training for all volunteers. Professional and volunteer instructors visit the schools on a regular basis. In addition, in-service workshops are held periodically at the Central Office and in the districts.

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SUPERVISION

The volunteers who teach reading or English as a second language generally work together as a unit in a special room in the school where the pupils come for their tutoring sessions. Each tutorial unit of volunteers is supervised by a Volunteer Chairman. The Chairman is an experienced School Volunteer who acts as liaison between the volunteers and the school professional staff.

The Chairmen in each district are supervised by a Field Coordinator (professional teacher) who makes regular visits to the schools in her district to assist the Chairmen with their administrative problems and to give on-the-job training to the volunteers.

In the case of volunteers who serve in classrooms, the immediate supervisor is the classroom teacher. However, the School Volunteer Field Coordinator visits them frequently at their schools to provide additional training and to insure harmonious working relationships between volunteers and teachers.

The city-wide Program is supervised and coordinated by the Director and Assistant Director, and by the Reading Help, English as a Second Language and Early Childhood specialists on the Central Office staff, who set guidelines for the training of volunteers and for the methodology and materials utilized throughout the Program. A Board of Trustees (incorporated at the New York City School Volunteer Program, Inc. for fund-raising purposes) acts in an advisory capacity. This Board is composed of experienced School Volunteers and knowledgeable members of the community at large.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

In June 1971 the New York State Legislature amended the State Education Law to include New York City School Volunteers in the liability insurance protection afforded the professionals in the school system.

Section 3028 of the Education Law now stipulates that the Board of Education is liable for all expenses incurred "in the defense of a teacher, member of a supervisory or administrative staff or employee, or authorized participant in the school volunteer program of the city school district of the city of New York* in any civil or criminal action or proceeding arising out of disciplinary action taken against any pupil of the district while in the discharge of his duties within the scope of his employment or authorized volunteer duties."*

Section 2560 of the law now stipulates that the Board of Education "shall assume liability to the extent that it shall save harmless any duly appointed member of the teaching or supervising staff, officer, or employee of such board, or authorized participant in the school volunteer program of the city school district of the city of New York* for damages arising out of the negligence of any such appointed member, officer or employee, resulting in personal injury or property damage either within or without the school buildings, provided the appointed member, officer or employee at the time damages were sustained was acting in the discharge of his duties and within the scope of his employment or authorized volunteer duties."*

* Emphasis ours

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THE READING HELP PROGRAM

The volunteers in the Reading Help Program serve as tutors for pupils referred to them by classroom teachers and other school personnel as likely to benefit from some individual attention. Generally these pupils are reading from one to three years below grade level and are receiving no professional remedial assistance.

Each pupil is helped twice weekly at the same hour by the same volunteer. Wherever possible, the pupils leave their classrooms to meet their volunteers in a special room set aside for this purpose.

The volunteer is trained to capitalize on the interests of the individual child, choosing from a wide variety of trade books, games and self-made materials on all levels of difficulty, not ordinarily found in the classroom. Starting at a level where the child can achieve success, the volunteer tries gradually to build the self-confidence the child needs to progress.

THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The aim of the School Volunteer English as a Second Language Program is to teach non-English speaking students enough oral English to enable them to function in their classrooms. The method is audio-visual-lingual, relying completely on direct association of objects and words, with no translation from any foreign language.

The volunteers work outside the classroom, each volunteer teaching two students at a time, twice a week for a thirty-minute period. The students are paired according to age, proficiency in English and personality. Since only English is used in the teaching sessions, the volunteer need not know a foreign language, and the two children need not know the same original language.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

The School Volunteer Early Childhood Program provides volunteer assistance for kindergarten, first and second grade classes.

The volunteers serve as an "extra pair of hands" for the teacher and as an enriching experience for the children. They help with classroom routines and with all activities requiring more than one adult: reading to and with individuals and small groups of children, helping with music and art activities, accompanying classes on trips, etc. The volunteers give pupils individual time and attention and encourage them to express themselves through language - an important pre-requisite for learning to read.

Early Childhood volunteers serve a minimum of two half-days or one full day each week in their assigned classrooms, under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher.

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PUBLICATIONS

Title	Author	Description	*Contribution for Postage & Handling
INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE		Manual of instructions for interviewers of prospective volunteers. Includes criteria and requirements for volunteers. 12 pp.	$ .50
SCHOOL VOLUNTEER READING REFERENCE HANDBOOK	Charlotte Mergentime	Manual for volunteers in the Reading Help Program. 39 pp.	$1.50
HANDBOOK FOR READING VOLUNTEERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS	Ethel Price	39 pp.	$1.50
CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH FOR THE NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILD	Nina Phillips	Manual for volunteers in the English as a Second Language Program. 129 pp. SHOULD BE ORDERED DIRECTLY FROM PUBLISHER: Teachers College Press Teachers College Columbia University New York, N.Y. 10027 Price: $3.50	
SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS	T. Margaret Jamer	Basic philosophy and history of the first six years of the New York City School Volunteer Program. 200 pp. SHOULD BE ORDERED DIRECTLY FROM: T. Margaret Jamer 112 East 70 Street New York, N.Y. 10021 Price: $4.25	

* CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM, INC.

Board of Education - City of New York

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READING HELP TRAINING FILM FOR SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

This black and white 16 mm. film is a two-hour summary of the 12½ hour training course in Reading Help developed by the New York City School Volunteer Program. It is useful not only for pre-service training but for supplementary instruction or as a refresher for experienced volunteers.

This 119 minute film is divided into three reels, as follows:

Reel 1: Introduction to the NYC School Volunteer Program and the role of the volunteer in education. Step by step description of how children learn to read beginning with early childhood. Running time 53 minutes.

Reel 2: Working with an individual student: diagnosis; procedures and objectives.

Demonstration lesson with a student. Running time 33 minutes.

Reel 3: The experience story.

Demonstration lesson with a student

How to structure a 45-minute reading lesson.
Running time 33 minutes.

COST

Rental of film - three reels $30. First reel $15; second and third reels $7.50 each.

Purchase of film - three reels $440. First reel $200; second and third reels $120 each.

Approximately one week's notice is required for delivery of film to be purchased or rented. Rental rates are based on approximately one week's use of film after receipt by you. If possible give alternate showing dates.

ORDERING FILM

Mail requests to: Board of Education of the City of New York
Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction (Sales and Rental Unit)
131 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Make checks payable to:
Board of Education, Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction,
Production and Distribution Unit

CAUTION: Do not send orders to the School Volunteer Program as it will delay them.

SHIPMENTS: Films will be sent to you by prepaid parcel post in ample time for your first showing. Please return them in the same manner. Note that educational films may be shipped at greatly reduced rates. Please return films in same carrying case.

FILM CARE: Please do not rewind after last showing. Check your projector before showing the film. Film damage will be charged to you. Films cannot be run on a silent projector without damaging the film.